UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
LIMITED

E/CONF.91/L.39
25 November 1997

ENGLISH ONLY

SEVENTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
ON THE STANDARDIZATION OF
GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES
New York, 13-22 January 1998
Item 5 (d) of the provisional agenda*

NATIONAL STANDARDIZATION: ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF NATIONAL NAMES AUTHORITIES

An administrative tool for a national names authority

The Strategic Plan of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

Paper submitted by Canada**

* E/CONF.91/1.

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97-36019 (E) 181297 231297

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CANADIAN PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

STRATEGIC PLAN

1997 UPDATE

• *Extracts only* •

CPCGN·CPCNG
1897-1997

OCTOBER 1997

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**EXTRACTS ONLY ARE PROVIDED HERE
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From page 1

OVERVIEW

The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names is today the national body coordinating toponymy in Canada, establishing general principles and standards for geographical naming within the country and providing authoritative toponymic information and advice to institutions and individuals both inside and outside Canada. Even after 100 years of a national names authority, much still remains to be undertaken in recording and disseminating Canada's toponymy.

Through the jurisdiction of its members, the CPCGN has a technical role to record and to approve geographical names for official use. In today's world of increasing and ever-changing technology, the CPCGN must ensure that records are well-maintained and readily accessible as a basic and very important layer of geographical information.

Increasingly this technical role is being enhanced by its socio-cultural role to preserve and disseminate information on the historical and cultural significance of Canada's toponyms. Geographical names affect the lives of Canadians through their sense of cultural tradition, and in their concepts of local, provincial and national identity. Toponymy is thus an integral part of our national heritage and an aspect of our culture that must be preserved.

In recognition of the responsibilities of the CPCGN, its national importance and critical role as the leader in technical and cultural aspects of toponymy must be underlined and reflected in its goals and in the activities of its Secretariat.

From pages 2 and 3

THE CANADIAN PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES

The original Geographic Board of Canada was established in 1897 in response to a need to provide standard name references to identify geographical features. Resource mapping beyond the frontiers of settlement and extensive immigration into Canada had underlined the importance of managing the country's geographical names.

In its early days the Board was essentially a federal body receiving advice from provincial agencies. By the 1960s, the responsibility to make decisions on the official names to be recognized in Canada was being transferred to the provinces. Today all provinces and territories have authority over names of features and places lying within their jurisdictions. Federal departments responsible for crown lands in Canada (e.g. national parks) also participate in the decision-making process.

The Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names (CPCGN) is now the umbrella organization - the national body coordinating geographical naming in Canada, stimulating the development of standard policies within Canada for handling geographical names and terminology, and encouraging the development of international standards in cooperation with the United Nations and other national authorities responsible for naming policies and practices.

Today, 25 members constitute the Committee, including a representative from each province and territory; from federal departments concerned with mapping, archives, national parks, Indian lands, statistics, and language issues; and the Chairs of advisory committees to the CPCGN (see Appendix 1).

Natural Resources Canada provides the Chair and Secretariat for this national committee. Since 1990 the CPCGN Chair, appointed by the Minister, has been from outside government.

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The first Order in Council created a national names authority (the Geographic Board of Canada) on December 18, 1897. Since then the Order in Council has been updated a number of times and has included a change of name to the Canadian Board on Geographical Names in 1948 and to the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names in 1961. The CPCGN currently functions under the 1990 Order in Council P.C. 1990-549 (see Appendix 2).

The CPCGN meets in plenary session once each calendar year and provides a forum for members to discuss toponymic issues of national and common interest. The Committee is assisted in its work by advisory committees that it establishes. Four are currently active (see page 8), others (e.g. Names outside Canada for official Canadian use) have completed their tasks and been disbanded.

In addition, ad hoc working groups address specific issues. In 1997, the Working Group on a Concise National Gazetteer and the Working Group on the CPCGN Centennial will complete their assignments. Other working groups may be useful, to help address issues, such as dissemination or training.

From page 6

CPCGN MISSION

To make authoritative toponymy for Canada readily accessible to the public.

CPCGN MANDATE

As the national body coordinating all matters affecting geographical nomenclature in Canada, the CPCGN has a technical role to record and to approve, through the jurisdictions of its members, names for official use, in accordance with general principles and standards developed by the Committee; and a socio-cultural role to preserve and disseminate information on the historical and cultural significance of Canada's toponyms. The CPCGN is also the body which represents Canada internationally in activities relating to toponymic standards and practices outside the jurisdiction of National Defence.

From page 9

CORE ACTIVITY AREAS

To serve the needs of Canadians the CPCGN must develop and execute programmes which lead to a clearly documented toponymy of Canada, with standardized toponyms disseminated as widely as possible for public use. Distributing this information internationally, in association with United Nations guidelines, will also promote the use of appropriate Canadian names in maps and documents produced by other countries.

The building of such a toponymic service for Canada involves work in several interlinked and interdependent areas.

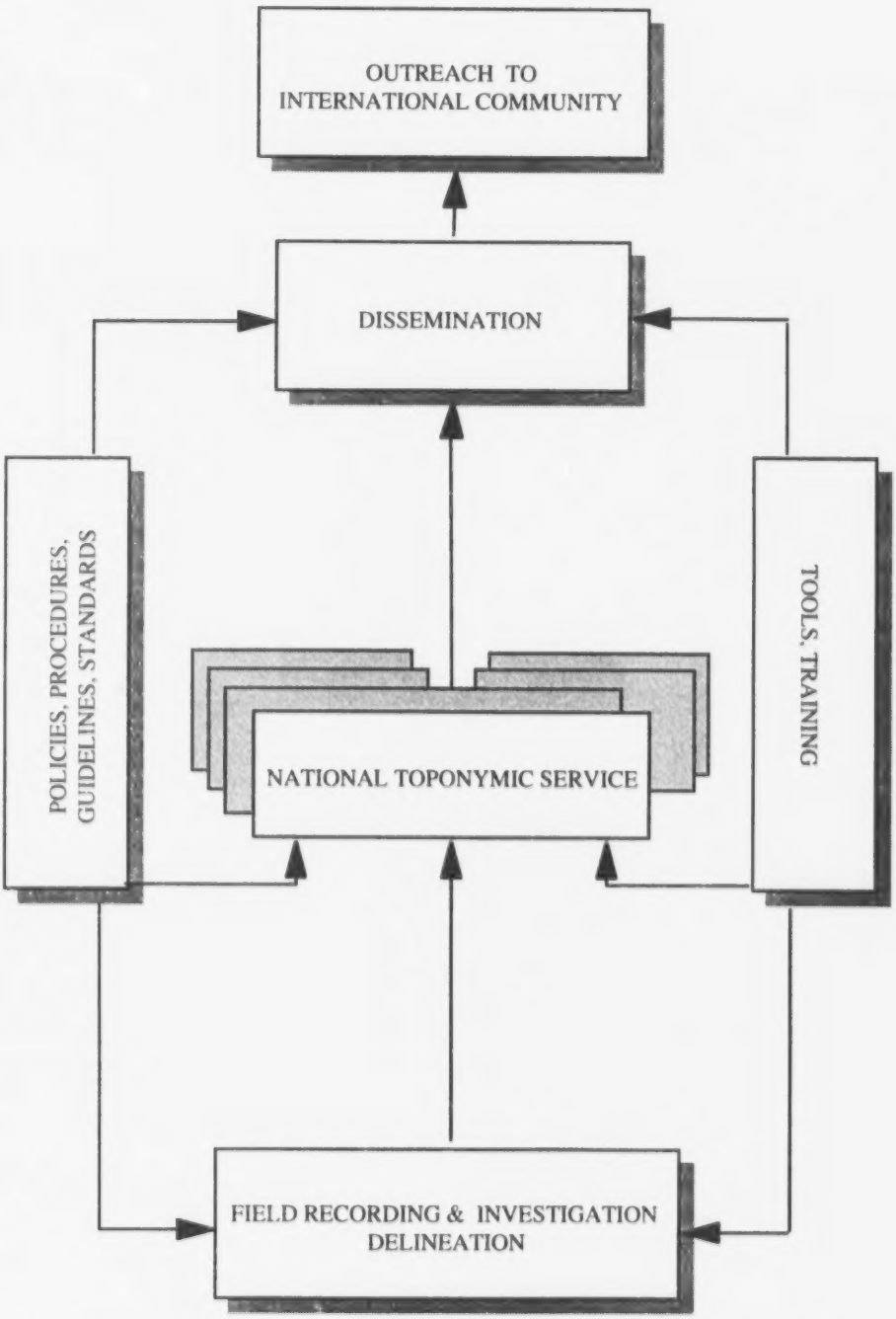
1. **Collection of geographical names across Canada and delineation of their applications**
2. **Automation of geographical names records and assurance of availability of information in automated systems**
3. **Development of national toponymic policies, principles, standards and guidelines**
4. **Provision of appropriate methodology, tools and training to support CPCGN programmes**
5. **Dissemination of accurate toponymic information**
6. **Outreach and liaison with the international community**

Collection of geographical names and delineation of their applications through basic field recording and records consultation is a foundation stone. Upon this we can build useful, accurate, unambiguous *toponymic data bases* for Canada, for use by government and the private sector in a wide variety of products. With names gathered in the field correctly reflecting the usage of English, French, indigenous and ethno-cultural groups in the country, *policies and guidelines* must be developed to give meaningful, consistent and authorized recognition of these names for cartographic and textual purposes, both inside and outside Canada. To help provide and maintain this framework, the CPCGN should develop and make available the appropriate *tools and training.*

Throughout the process of documenting our toponymic heritage, *dissemination of clear, accurate information*, both on the Committee, its principles and procedures, and on the geographical names of the country are of great importance. Only by making available the information recorded, processed and made official, is the Committee meeting the ongoing responsibilities of its technical and cultural roles as guardian of the toponymy of Canada. With the expertise built up in geographical names, it is important too that the CPCGN participates in *outreach and liaison with the international community* to share our knowledge and experience and to help develop standardization guidelines suitable for world-wide use.

At the same time, the realization of the rights of Indigenous peoples, and the importance of recording information only existing in oral tradition, and fast being lost, are vital and critical considerations in developing a consistent, well-structured plan for Canadian toponymy. The significance of naming by Indigenous peoples has already been stated in the resolutions of the 1986 Native Geographical Names Symposium (endorsed by the CPCGN in 1987).

CORE ACTIVITY AREAS



SOME ELEMENTS OF DISSEMINATION OF GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES